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# Security Council

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## Letter dated 1 December 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Please find enclosed a copy of a letter sent to the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Stephen O'Brien, regarding the briefing by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs delivered at the Security Council meeting on the situation in the Middle East held on 23 November 2016 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Danny **Danon**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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## Annex to the letter dated 1 December 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I am writing with regard to the statement delivered by you at the Security Council meeting on the situation in the Middle East held on 23 November 2016. Regrettably, this briefing failed to provide a complete picture of the situation on the ground and transgressed the principles of impartiality and neutrality expected from a United Nations organization.

First, your description of the reason for Israeli regulations on the entry of humanitarian personnel into Gaza was dismissive of Israel's genuine security concerns. By placing "security" in quotes, you cast unjustifiable doubt on the motivation behind those regulations and ignore the reality Israel faces on a daily basis.

It should be made abundantly clear that the terror organization Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip, poses a dire threat to the safety and security of Israeli citizens. The rockets fired at Israel and the discovery of terror tunnels in the past year demonstrate that Hamas is actively preparing for another conflict. This is the same organization that is known to have exploited humanitarian agencies to divert materials for its military build-up. Hamas regularly confiscates, diverts and smuggles resources dedicated to the reconstruction of Gaza and rededicates them to its priorities: digging terror tunnels, constructing training camps and manufacturing rockets. In the light of such threats, Israel must protect its citizens by ensuring that humanitarian activity is not being misused or exploited.

Second, a factor that was completely missing from the briefing was a description of the significant steps Israel is taking to facilitate the reconstruction of Gaza, even as it deals with deep and tangible security concerns. There was no mention of the daily efforts of Israeli authorities to ensure that supplies and materials reach those who need them in Gaza or of the long-term projects Israel promotes for critical infrastructure, such as water and electricity.

Every single day, 800 trucks go through the Kerem Shalom and Erez crossings into the Gaza Strip. Israel is working to increase that capacity to 1,000 trucks per day. Thus far, Israel has facilitated the transfer of over 6 million tons of building materials for the reconstruction mechanism, including 4.7 million tons of aggregates, over 1 million tons of cement and 190,000 tons of iron. If need be, Israel can provide a specific list of humanitarian relief actions it has been conducting to promote the well-being of the people of Gaza.

Third, regarding humanitarian activity in Area C, it should be made clear that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and other humanitarian actors are well aware that the delivery of aid should be coordinated with Israel in advance. Those who choose to take one-sided actions without coordination with Israel do so out of sheer political motivations, at the expense of the vulnerable communities that they profess to protect. As you stated yourself, these vulnerable civilians have no place as instruments in a political strategy. We expect OCHA to heed to its own advice.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that the purpose of your address to the Council on that occasion was to offer a factual briefing, describing the humanitarian situation on the ground. Your appeal to the Council advocating political action not only is contrary to that purpose but also undermines and politicizes the role of OCHA as a humanitarian organization.

(*Signed*) Danny **Danon**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative